



STATE OF VERMONT
Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

MEMORANDUM

TO: Special Education Directors, Principals and Superintendents
FROM: Karin Edwards, Director, Student Support Team
RE: IDEIA Focus Topic: Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities using
Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI)
DATE: February 6, 2006
Field Memo: FM#06-01

What is RtI?

Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI) is a system for monitoring student progress within the general education curriculum. This model grows out of a provision in the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 that indicates: *A local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific research-based intervention as a part of evaluation procedures.* Additionally, *States may not require that LEAs use a severe discrepancy model* (614 (a) (6)(B)). RtI uses a process for identifying struggling learners within the general education program as well as students who may be identified as showing evidence of a specific learning disability. The model is characterized by the early identification and provision of support to students who are not achieving within the general education curriculum. Fundamental to this model is the provision of high quality classroom instruction. Those students, who are not making progress at the expected levels, are supported through the Educational Support Team (EST).

A Responsiveness to Intervention Model is characterized by:

- High quality general education instruction
- Universal screening of students' abilities
- Continuous progress monitoring of student performance
- Educational decision making that is based on student performance data
- Supplemental services provided in multiple tiers of increasingly intense student interventions
- School-wide service delivery models that utilize on-going assessment and instruction in making decisions about a student's progress
- Eligibility for special education is determined when a student exhibits large differences from expected levels of performance in general education, following insufficient response to high quality, research-based general education with supplemental interventions
- Educational support teams that support the RtI process by monitoring student progress and assisting in decision making

What does this mean for local districts?

- The implementation of RtI will be a thoughtful and organized process.
- Current proposed special education regulations do **NOT** require the implementation of an RtI model.
- Current proposed special education regulations **DO** allow for the voluntary adoption of an RtI model.
- LEAs shall not be required to take into consideration if a child has a severe discrepancy.
- The voluntary nature of the adoption of an RtI process will result in a dual model for identification of specific learning disabilities.
- The new special education rules that we expect to have in place by next August will provide guidance in this area.
- If you are implementing RtI and are not a pilot site, please contact Janna Osman at the DOE for further support (802) 828-0545.

What are we doing?

- A series of four topic group discussions have been conducted with feedback to the DOE on the implications of RtI on general education instruction, assessment practices, parental involvement, and professional development, to name a few areas covered. This information will be used to guide in the implementation of RtI in Vermont, (see attached).
- Four schools were selected to pilot RtI based on their response to indicators on the “RtI Readiness Tool”, which can be found on the DOE Website. These sites will engage in professional development activities in order to prepare for the implementation of an RtI model in January 2007.
- Department of Education personnel are participating in the national RtI dialogue in an effort to learn from the experiences of other states.
- Information pertaining to RtI is being provided to districts that express an interest.
- The DOE will be building a web site to support RtI efforts.